

# BOSTON INFORMER

No. 1 Newsletter for the Downtown, Waterfront, North End, Beacon Hill, South Station and West End March-April 1992

## Welcome to The Boston Informer

This is the first issue of Boston's only easy-access resource to construction projects, planning initiatives, Central Artery updates, transportation changes, Boston Harbor activities, and more. Covering Boston's downtown, waterfront, Beacon Hill, West End, South Station, and North End, *The Boston Informer* will keep you up-to-date on what's going on in your neighborhood and will serve as a guide to finding out more about projects and plans that will affect you, whether you live, work or visit here.

The region is in the middle of a major recession and clearly not as much is going on as several years ago when Boston was truly a boomtown. Yet, there is a lot happening in the city now, from the early construction contracts for the Central Artery/Tunnel project to designing the new Federal Courthouse on Fan Pier.

As Boston's only newsletter focusing on issues in this geographic area, *The Boston Informer* will fill you in on events and issues of importance to you and that aren't covered by the newspapers. And *The Boston Informer* will do it in a concise, direct, hassle-free way.



### TRANSPORTATION

The Central Artery is not the only thing happening with transportation. The MBTA, in the planning and construction directorate and operations, has projects on the boards that will affect how you get around in downtown Boston, including major changes that are happening at North and South stations. And transportation is not just the MBTA—private bus carriers, taxi cabs, water shuttles, bicycles, tour buses, Amtrak—all modes of transportation are planning, designing, and building now. The Central Artery/Tunnel project is forcing public transportation authorities and private companies to mobilize.



### PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Sargent's Wharf, Burroughs Wharf, Bulfinch Triangle, South Station Technopolis Center—grand plans, is anything happening? From South Station to North Station, plans are being developed for the Central Artery air rights, South Station Transportation Center and air rights, Boston Edison substation, Parcel 7, and many other projects. Public and private development plans are always being created, revised, scaled up, scaled down, and often, no one knows anything about the plans or the potential impacts.



### CENTRAL ARTERY/TUNNEL

Although the Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project is one of the biggest projects in Boston now, it's not yet visible, both in terms of actual construction and information on upcoming construction, schedules, and planning. Boston's downtown, North End and waterfront areas will very soon get a taste of the future—Central Artery utility relocations are due to start in summer 1992. In addition to reorganizing a maze of utility lines, these early-action contracts also include reversing the direction of streets, removing an on-ramp to I-93, and other related actions. How to deal with the substitute for the Scheme Z Charles River crossing is still the subject of talk and negotiation, with funding the big question mark.



### BOSTON HARBOR

The \$6 billion clean-up project run by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is on schedule and within budget. Deer Island is no longer the site of a jail, but a primary treatment plant. Sail Boston '92, an extravaganza of the Tall Ships on parade, will be an event of Fourth of July proportions. Be prepared for the onslaught of tourists and gawkers July 11-16. Dredging the Harbor continues for the construction of the Third Harbor Tunnel, an extension of the Turnpike. Some 90,000 cubic yards of Harbor sediments will be deposited in a pit built at Governor's Island in Logan Airport. Ideas about depositing material excavated from the landside ends of the tunnel, instead of from the Harbor, at Spectacle Island and creating the park earlier than planned are being considered. New MWRA director Douglas MacDonald began in mid February.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- What's down at Park Street?
- What's up at International Place?
- What's new at South Station?
- What's not happening on the waterfront?
- Would you believe...the New Northern Avenue Bridge



## What's Up?

**1** The first utility relocation work (contract C014A) will be done on the relocation of a 30-inch gas line along Purchase, Pearl, High, Batterymarch and Custom House streets. Key utility relocation contract 14C has been delayed and will not begin until late summer. Some minor work for contract 14B in the North End area will start mid-summer, but indecision about the Scheme Z Charles River crossing has delayed many of the key North End utility relocations.

**2** Design of Aquarium station was on hold until the interface issues between the Central Artery project and the MBTA were resolved. The northbound Central Artery tunnel will pass directly above the Blue Line with the top of the transit tunnel serving as the floor of the highway tunnel. Plans are to extend the Aquarium platform across State Street and have entrances on both sides of State Street.

**3** The New England Aquarium, after being forced for economic reasons to stay in its present quarters instead of moving into a state-of-the-art facility in Charlestown, is looking at ways to expand its facility on Central Wharf.

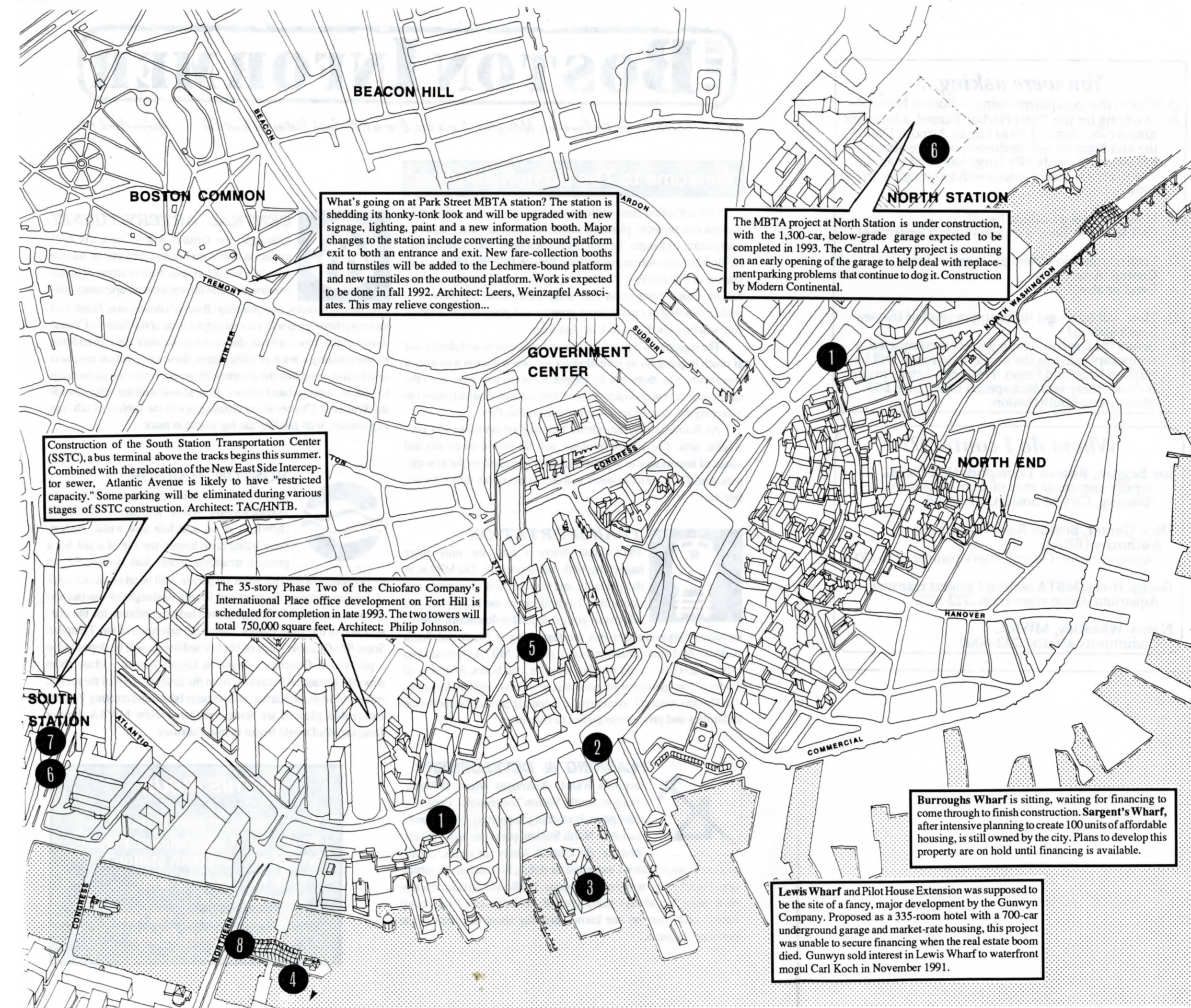
**4** New Federal courthouse is being planned and designed for the Fan Pier site. The MBTA is designing an "underground transitway," using electric buses in a tunnel, that will run from South Station to World Trade Center that will serve the courthouse. Architect: I.M. Pei-Jung/Brannen.

**5** The Custom House Tower, Boston's oldest "skyscraper" and air-rights project, is not likely to be transformed into the 340-room luxury hotel planned by the Beal Companies in the near future. The City bought the tower for \$11 million in 1987; it's now worth less than \$4.5 million. The lack of outside financing makes the City's offer of a bond issue useless.

**6** Catch a train to Portland... U.S. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine) secured \$250,000 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act to study a South Station to North Station link, possibly with a tunnel under Congress Street. This study is likely to be done not by the MBTA but by the US Dept. of Transportation in Cambridge.

**7** The MBTA's Old Colony Restoration Project is being touted as a major Central Artery traffic mitigation measure. The Old Colony service, originally to be three branches, now looks as if it will be only the lines to Middleborough and Plymouth. The controversial proposed line through Hingham is on hold. This project is far from being a sure thing: although 50 percent of the almost \$600 million cost will be paid for by the state, the MBTA is counting on the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the rest. The removal of one of the branches from the project significantly reduces the cost-effectiveness of the project, critical for FTA. And will this project—already at least two years behind schedule—relieve Artery congestion? Carrying fewer than 9,000 riders a day—fewer than the Mass. Ave. bus #1—the two lines won't be in service until 1995 (?)...

**8** Believe it or not, the New Northern Avenue Bridge will finally be built. This new Massachusetts Highway Dept. bridge, originally planned in the 1970s, has been one of the slowest projects to get started. The bridge piers were built last year, and the contract for the superstructure was finally awarded in 1991. Designed by Ammann & Whitney, the contractor is Modern Continental. The bridge is expected to open in July 1994.



What's going on at Park Street MBTA station? The station is shedding its honky-tonk look and will be upgraded with new signage, lighting, paint and a new information booth. Major changes to the station include converting the inbound platform exit to both an entrance and exit. New fare-collection booths and turnstiles will be added to the Lechmere-bound platform and new turnstiles on the outbound platform. Work is expected to be done in fall 1992. Architect: Leers, Weinzapfel Associates. This may relieve congestion...

The MBTA project at North Station is under construction, with the 1,300-car, below-grade garage expected to be completed in 1993. The Central Artery project is counting on an early opening of the garage to help deal with replacement parking problems that continue to dog it. Construction by Modern Continental.

Construction of the South Station Transportation Center (SSTC), a bus terminal above the tracks begins this summer. Combined with the relocation of the New East Side Interceptor sewer, Atlantic Avenue is likely to have "restricted capacity." Some parking will be eliminated during various stages of SSTC construction. Architect: TAC/HNTB.

The 35-story Phase Two of the Chiofaro Company's International Place office development on Fort Hill is scheduled for completion in late 1993. The two towers will total 750,000 square feet. Architect: Philip Johnson.

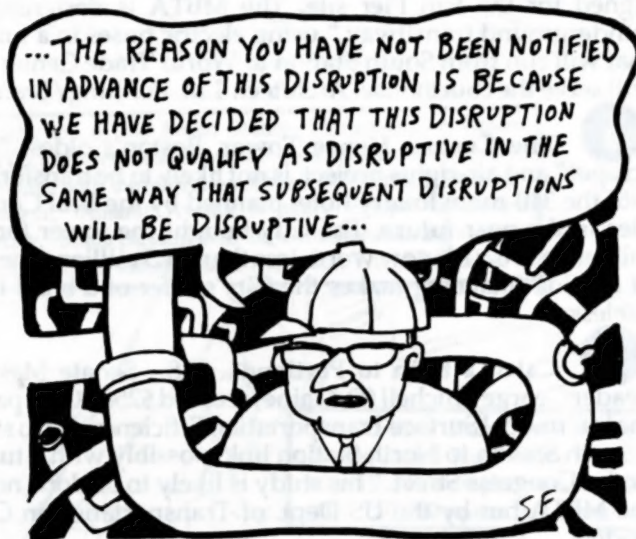
Burroughs Wharf is sitting, waiting for financing to come through to finish construction. Sargent's Wharf, after intensive planning to create 100 units of affordable housing, is still owned by the city. Plans to develop this property are on hold until financing is available.

Lewis Wharf and Pilot House Extension was supposed to be the site of a fancy, major development by the Gunwyn Company. Proposed as a 335-room hotel with a 700-car underground garage and market-rate housing, this project was unable to secure financing when the real estate boom died. Gunwyn sold interest in Lewis Wharf to waterfront mogul Carl Koch in November 1991.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ Construction begins on new Northern Avenue Bridge March 1992
- ▶ North End utility work begins Summer 1992
- ▶ National Transportation Week—State Transportation Bldg. May 11-15
- ▶ Women's Transportation Seminar Conference May 20-22
- ▶ Sail Boston '92 July 11-16
- ▶ Construction begins on South Station Transportation Center July 1992



(F)UTILITY

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## You were asking...

- Q. What is that equipment doing in Boston Harbor?  
A. Dredging for the Third Harbor Tunnel, a four-lane tunnel extension of I-90 to Logan Airport. Dredging and blasting will be done to remove about 839,000 cubic yards (676 barge loads) of material. The twelve-segment tunnel will be complete in 1994.
- Q. How can I get a pothole fixed?  
A. Call 482-5300, Boston Public Works Department
- Q. I collect rats. How can I get some of those Central Artery rats?  
A. Dead or alive?
- Q. How will buses get to the upper level of the new South Station?  
A. Before the Central Artery project is completed, a temporary ramp to the new bus terminal will be built on Kneeland Street. When the Artery project is done, there will be a special ramp from I-93 directly into South Station.

## Whom do I contact??

- Joe Beggan, Boston Transportation Dept.,  
Deputy commissioner of Central Artery  
planning, City of Boston..635-3086
- Dick Garver, Boston Redevelopment  
Authority (BRA),  
Deputy director; Central Artery planner...722-4300
- George Hines, MBTA assistant project manager,  
Aquarium station renovation...722-6122
- Nancy Wheatley, MWRA,  
Community affairs...242-6000

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